



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

1800 Washington Boulevard • Baltimore MD 21230

410-537-3000 • 1-800-633-6101

Martin O'Malley
Governor

Robert M. Summers, Ph.D.
Secretary

Anthony G. Brown
Lieutenant Governor

February 21, 2014

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chairperson
Members of the House Environmental Matters Committee
Room 231, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Support, House Bill 718 – *Community Cleanup and Greening Act of 2014*

Dear Chairperson McIntosh and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has reviewed House Bill 718 – *Community Cleanup and Greening Act of 2014* – and we would like to express our support for the bill's overall objectives of recycling and waste reduction.

MDE recognizes that there is a trend toward increased recycling of plastic bags and that the District of Columbia has seen great success in implementing their "Skip the Bag, Save the River" law to reduce litter and increase the use of reusable shopping bags. The Department is supportive of these types of activities that would result in reduced disposal and littering, increased recycling of plastic and paper shopping bags, and greater usage of reusable shopping bags. Waste diversion and recycling saves energy, reduces greenhouse gasses and other pollutants generated in the manufacturing process and at landfills, saves natural resources, and reduces the amount of waste disposed.

Additionally, MDE has determined that the Anacostia River watershed and portions of Baltimore Harbor are actually impaired (i.e., not attaining water quality standards) because of trash. In preparing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) to address the trash impairments in these waters, MDE has noted that plastic bags constitute a significant portion of the trash, and that plastic bags are very persistent in the environment. The problem of trash in our streams is an important concern, and an unnecessary source of pollution. MDE supports HB 718 as consistent with the goals of both the Anacostia River trash TMDL and the proposed Baltimore Harbor trash TMDL, as well as with the Department's larger mission to restore and protect our environment.

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor House Bill 718 during the Committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or by e-mail at Jeffrey.fretwell@maryland.gov if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Fretwell

cc: Lee Currey, Director, Science Services Administration

